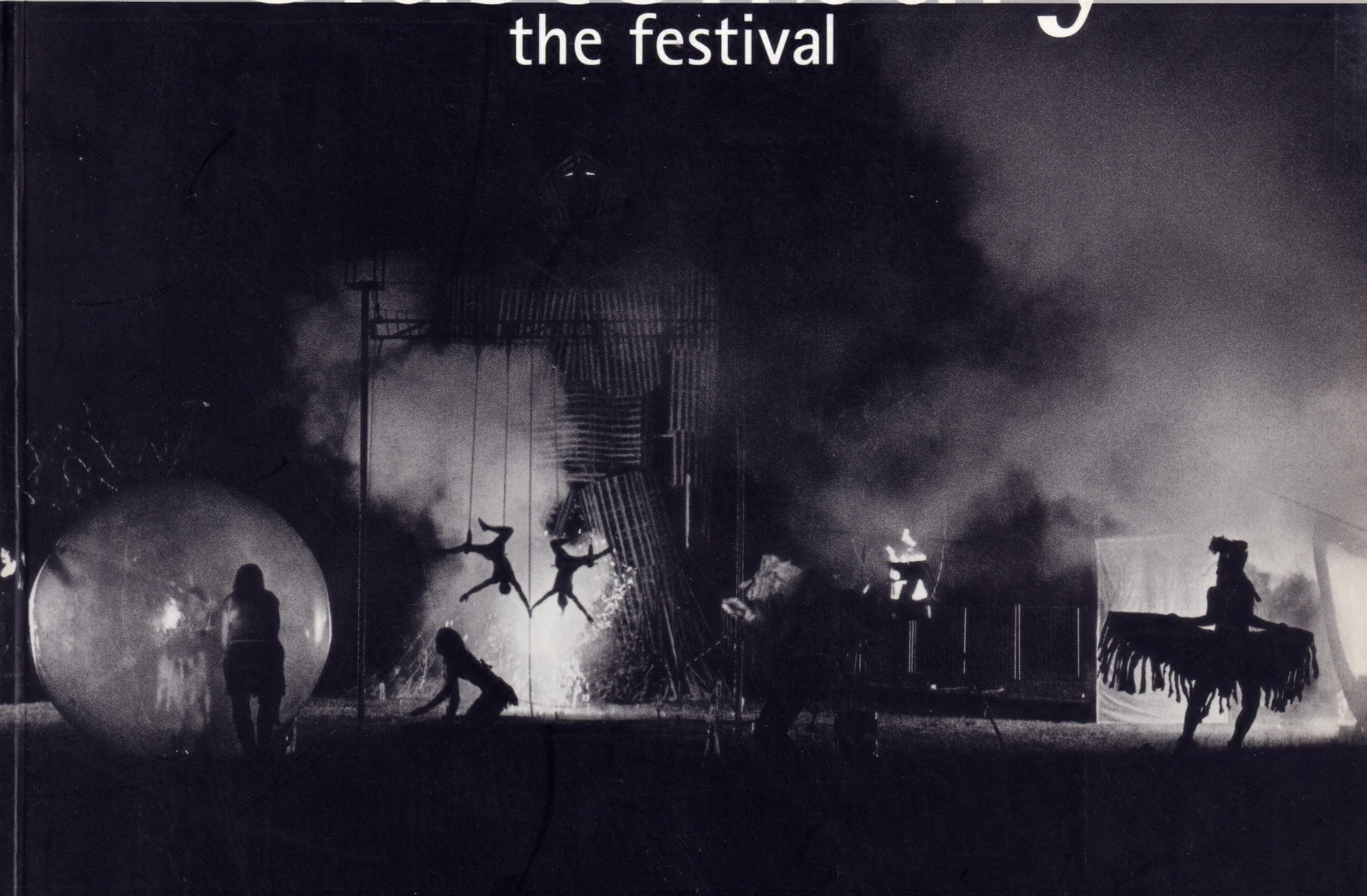


Glastonbury

the festival



photographs
Ron Reid and Liam Bailey

foreword
John Peel

Glastonbury

the festival

photographs
Ron Reid and Liam Bailey

foreword
John Peel

ALBEDO | **PRESS**



All prints by Ian McMaster of Joe's Basement

foreword

by John Peel

Those late 1960s rock festivals, despite their having become the stuff of legend, are a bit of a blur in the memory. A blur composed of snapshots rather than moving pictures. There are bands there, of course, and faint echoes of performance - where was it I saw the Everly Brothers? - but most of the memories are of people and places rather than of music. I seem to remember going to the very first Glastonbury with Marc Bolan and his wife, June, but when I mentioned this a couple of years ago to Michael Eavis, he told me I couldn't have done. Perhaps he's right. I know for sure that I went to the first Isle of Wight Festival, not because Jefferson Airplane played there but because I gave my only pair of socks to a shivering woman and almost immediately regretted doing so.

I can do better with the Bath Festival of Blues '69, apparently the event that fired the Eavis imagination and led to 25 years of Glastonburys. I have a photocopy of the programme, a document which includes a foreword by (Sir) Michael Tippett. Michael hoped he could 'manage time during the 10 hours to look in on what is happening'. He wanted, he said, to hear as many bands as he possibly could. Isn't that sweet? I'd like to give Britain's best known composer a ring to discover which bands he did see that day, but I seem to have mislaid his number. Did he, I wonder, catch Led Zeppelin and Fleetwood Mac or did he have to make do with the opening bands, the Deep Blues Band and Just Before Dawn? Actually, if we remember the music from festivals at all, I suppose it is the big names we remember but I often wonder about those bands we've never heard of before (and often never hear of again) that get to open the proceedings. Where are the Deep Blues Band and Just Before Dawn now? What are their memories of the Festival of Blues? Were they aware that Sir Michael Tippett yearned to look in on them?

Also listed among the runners at Bath were the Liverpool Scene and the Edgar Broughton Band, both perennial and seemingly inescapable festival bands of the period - same as Hawkwind, Man and loads of others. The Broughtons travelled from gig to gig in a Dormobile, along with Mr and Mrs Broughton who, in addition to being the parents of two thirds of the noisy trio, were the band's roadcrew. The Broughtons were the definitive festival band, able, in some indefinable way, to set the night alive in a manner denied to many headliners, bands arriving with a flourish in smart cars, protected by truculent management, scampering on stage for an impersonal 'Hi there Bath (or Reading or Weeley or Hollywood or Buxton or wherever)' before making a quick getaway an hour and a quarter later. But when Edgar and the lads hit their "out, demons, out" stride, everything seemed to fall into place. I don't suppose anyone, me included, knew precisely which demons we were attempting to exorcise but we were happy to keep at it for fifteen or twenty minutes at a time. The Broughtons are still out there somewhere and I'd like to see them do another festival, just for old time's sake.

Back to the snapshots in my head. Did I really sit on a fourposter bed with Frank Zappa trying to interview him before the Mothers of Invention played at Shepton Mallet? And did he really only want to talk about money? I was supposed to compere, along with Mike Raven, the festival but was repeatedly refused access to the stage by Hell's Angels who had taken over security duties. Eventually I gave up and lay in our Dormobile beneath the stage and heard, in the small hours of the morning, Pink Floyd playing 'Atom Heart Mother'. Drifting in and out of sleep with the astonishing noise above our heads provided some of the very best festival moments. Shepton Mallet promoter, Fred Bannister, had tried to ensure

that the paying customer was free from what we would probably at the time have styled 'hassles'. Food and drink were supposed to be on sale in plentiful quantities and at fixed prices, and stewards - 'many are students, they are there to help you', claimed the programme - would check that food was of an (unspecified) standard.

Unfortunately, such decent concern for the welfare and enjoyment of the festival-goer was not shown at every event. I remember with especial horror those in the hills above Buxton, Derbyshire. At the last and worst of these, stage management was entrusted to a man who managed a club in town, who turned up, amid rain and mud of Flanders proportions, in gent's natty evening wear. With no disco equipment available for the playing of top tunes between bands, we had to use - or attempt to use - his home stereo, complete with smoked perspex top. Chuck Berry and Roy Wood were amongst those billed to appear but I didn't stay around long enough to find out whether they played or not. A naked, mud-encrusted psycho with a knife and a hostile manner clambered onto the stage and, brandishing the knife, announced that he wished to make an announcement. A rapid mental calculation persuaded me that if I made haste, I could get home in time for Match of the Day. I told the creature from the slime that from now on he was the compere, warned him that the inadequacies of the PA would ensure that he was inaudible anyway, and set off through the mud to look for the van.

Turning back, in the manner established long ago by Lot's wife, for one last look at the hideous scene, I saw three lads silhouetted against the thunderous sky, sheltering as best they could beneath an ex-army groundsheet. Wishing I had my camera to hand to capture this classic festival noir image, I swore a terrible oath that I would never again, in any capacity, go to a rock, pop, blues, jazz, folk, whatever festival.

Apart from a succession of Readings and a handful of Pink Pops in Holland, I stuck with that too. Until five years ago, that

is, when Andy Kershaw persuaded me that, twenty years after I either did or didn't go to that first Glastonbury, I should head west from East Anglia again. Within an hour of arriving on site, I was regretting all those Glastonburys in between that I had missed. The great beauty of Glastonbury for me lies in the understanding that you can have a ripping weekend without deliberately setting out to hear any music at all. The musical highlights have been there, of course, as varied as Orbital, Sharon Shannon, Tom Jones, DreadZone and, in a tent somewhere with a bottle of pungent Eastern European 'wine', the Cheap Suit Ooroonies. But it's the aimless, some would say mindless, pottering I like, the mixture of sounds, smells and tastes, of conversations engaged in and overheard, the natural theatricality of it all, the fact that the incredible and the reassuringly mundane walk side by side. These are the things I had hoped for but rarely found when I set off from home for those late '60s festivals.

Ron Reid

1971









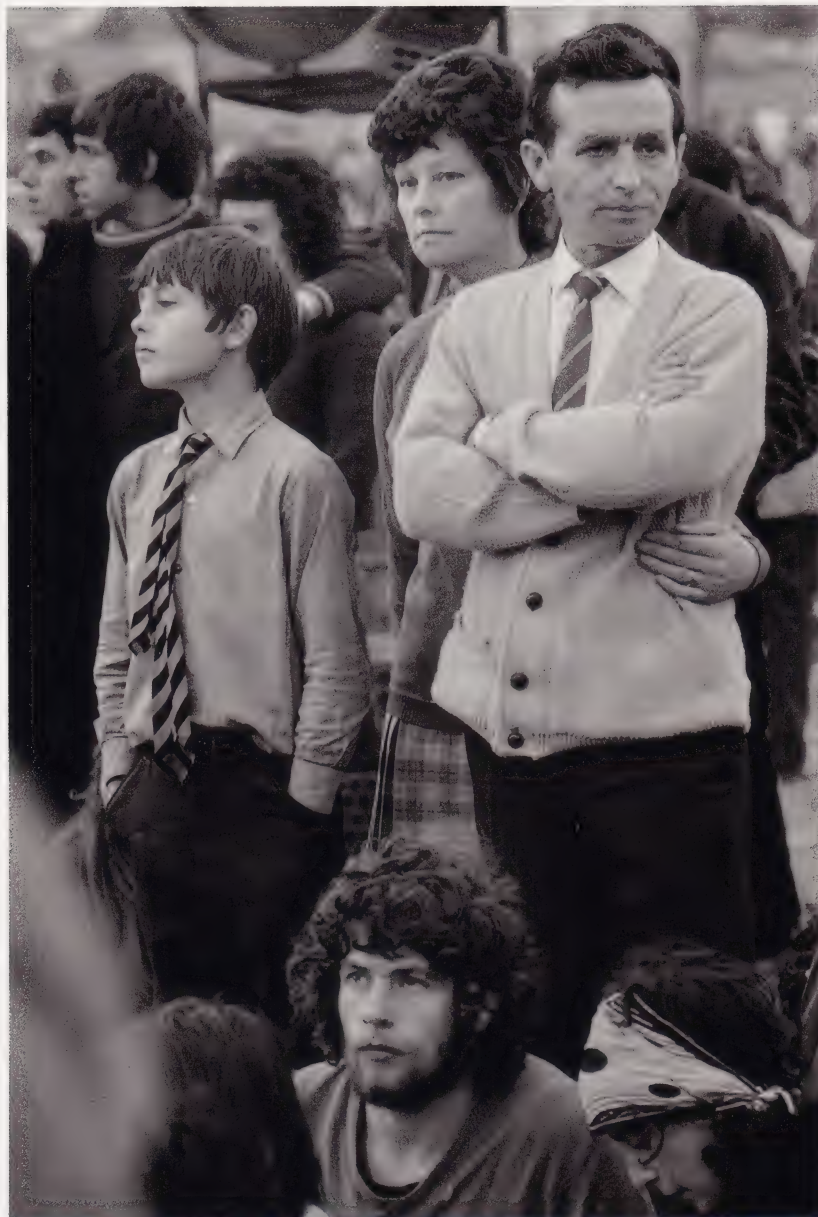


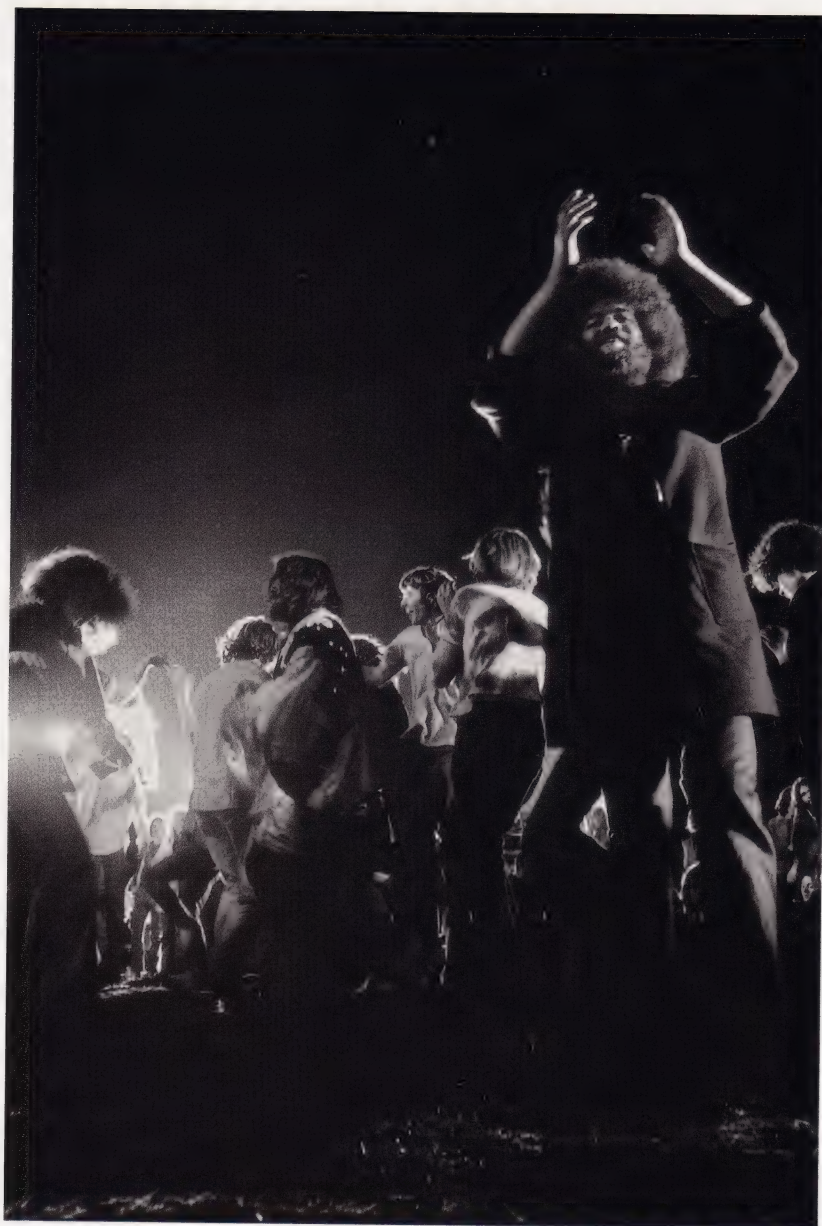


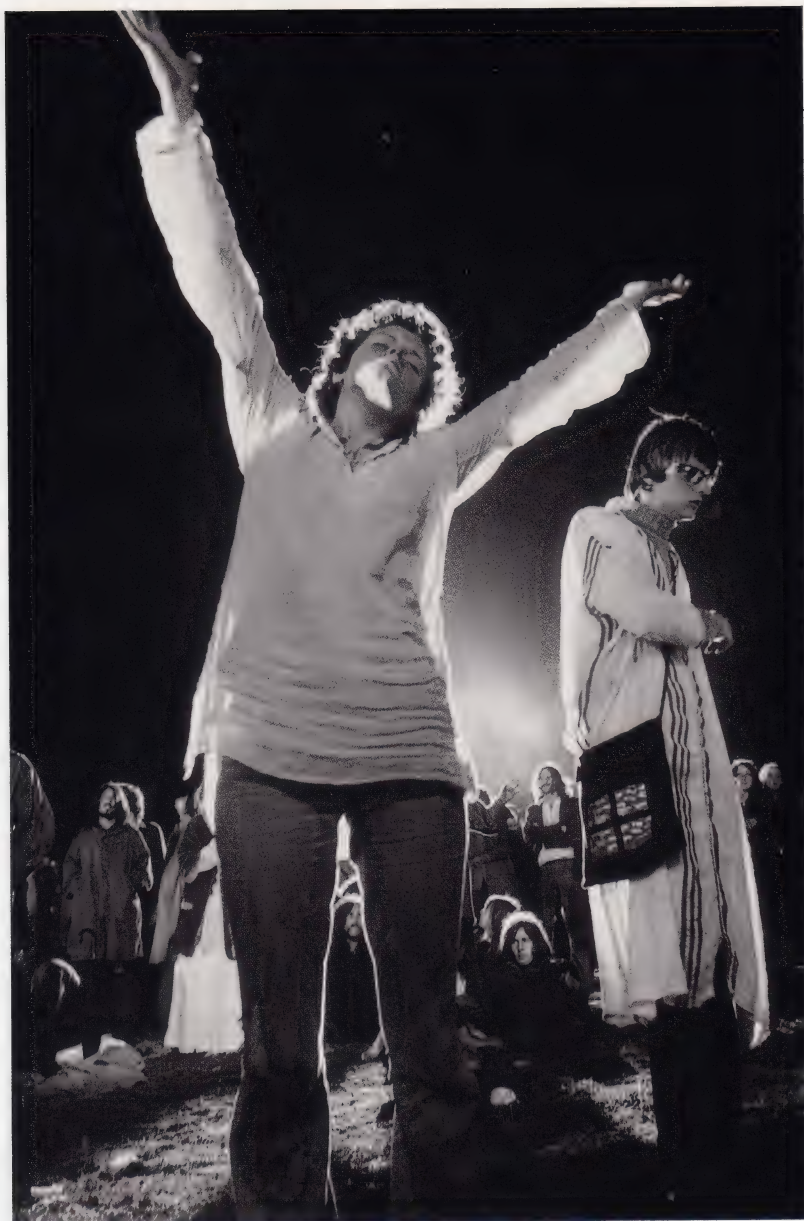














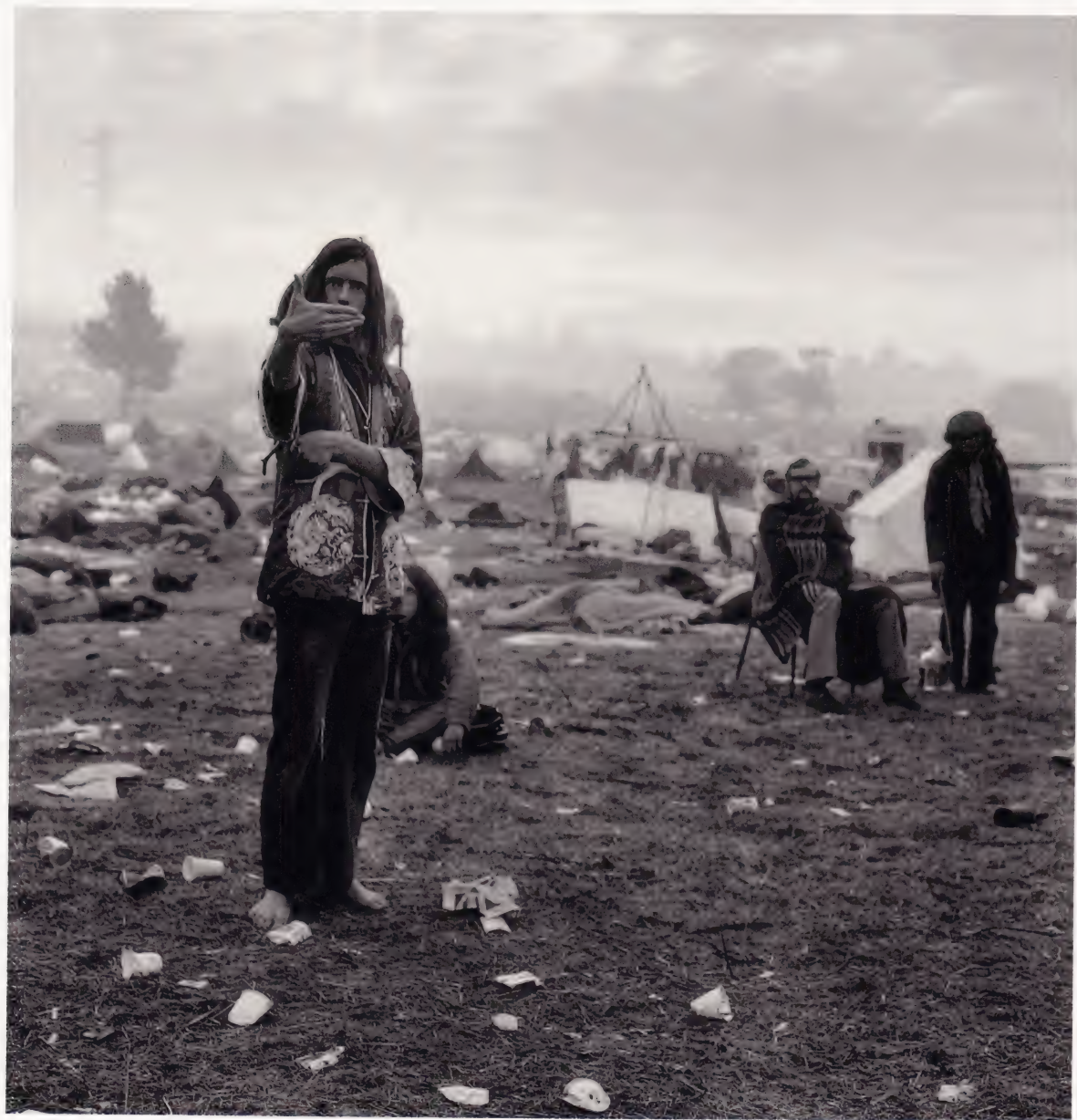












Glastonbury, historic site of mystical power and since the second century BC a place for summer gatherings, for celebration and revelry.

A ten mile wide Zodiac circle dating back to 2700 BC has been identified in the contours and features of the landscape, colossal earthworks which represent the dome of the starry firmament inverted upon earth.

According to ancient tradition Christ came as a child, accompanying his uncle, Joseph of Arimathea, and here Joseph is said to have returned in AD 63, bringing with him the Holy Grail to establish the first Christian church of Britain.

Glastonbury Tor, topped by the tower of St Michael, was once islanded by water and known as 'Isle of Glass'. It overlooks the vale of Avalon in which lies the 6th century grave of King Arthur and Queen Guinevere and is only a few miles north of the original site of Camelot.

"I am going ...

To the island-valley of Avilion;

Where falls not hail nor rain nor any snow,

Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns"

Tennyson, Morte d'Arthur

The Festival

In 1970 dairy farmer Michael Eavis, inspired by seeing Led Zeppelin and Donovan at the Bath Blues Festival, hosted a gathering of 2,000 people at Worthy Farm, each paying £1 (including free milk) to see a line up including Marc Bolan and T. Rex. This was the beginning of what has become the greatest festival in Europe, attracting nearly one million people over a quarter century and some of the world's greatest entertainers.

In 1971 the summer solstice became the chosen ascension for the Glastonbury Fayre, a free festival organised "in the mediaeval tradition with music, dance, poetry, theatre, lights and the opportunity for spontaneous entertainment". David Bowie, Hawkwind and Traffic played on a pyramid stage built at the apex of ley lines dissecting Worthy Farm.

"If the Fayre has a specific intention it is to create an increase of awareness in the power of the Universe, a heightening of consciousness and a recognition of our place in the function of this our tired and molested planet ... we're going to concentrate the celestial fire and pump it into the planet to stimulate growth"

Andrew Kerr, festival organiser, 1971

"People of normal decency will regard them as sordid and even depraved"

Robert Boscawen, MP for Wells, 1971

Due to lack of funds no further festival was held until 1979, although in both 1976 and 1978 500 people turned up for an impromptu gathering. The latter was powered with 10p pieces off a nearby caravan's electricity meter. In 1979 Michael Eavis secured a bank loan to organise a festival with Arabella Churchill to raise money for the United Nations' Year of the Child and 12,000 people paid £5 to see Peter Gabriel and Sky.

In the 1980s Michael Eavis took control of the Festival and established it as a benefit for CND. In the course of the decade the Festival welcomed 350,000 people to a permanent pyramid stage constructed out of telegraph poles and ex-MOD metal sheeting, which doubled as Worthy farm's winter feed store. With performers and speakers as diverse as New Order and Bruce Kent, John Cooper Clarke and the Bishop of Bath and Wells, Curtis Mayfield and Rik Mayall, Madness and Petra Kelly, Van Morrison and Heathcote Williams, £750,000 was donated to CND and local charities.

"I just managed to get to the road and head for home. I was doing about 70mph all the way but I was picking bits of cheesecloth and teepee out of the radiator for weeks"

Alexei Sayle, leaving Glastonbury

In 1992 Michael Eavis decided to channel all proceeds from the festival to Greenpeace and in the course of three years £750,000 was raised with an audience of 250,000. The festival grew to encompass 40 acres and 1,000 acts each year, including Primal Scream and Tom Jones, the Velvet Underground and Rolf Harris, Johnny Cash and the Levellers .

"The cheque which has now been handed over to the police represents 12.6% of the total cash raised at the event"

£241,500 to Avon & Somerset Police for 3 days policing in 1990

"Towards the main stages the markets are a writhing mess of frenzied mass consumption that have turned these normally sleepy Somerset fields into a barter town more comparable to downtown Bombay after the water supply has been spiked with acid"

'Bowels of Steel' NME 1993

Glastonbury, the festival, has become an augur in the development of youth culture and the apotheosis of all that is revered, abused and enjoyed - and all at one of our most significant spiritual sites.

Liam Bailey
1992-94







































Published by Albedo Press 1995

22 Bushey Hill Road
London SE5 8QJ

Telephone: 0171 708 5504

Facsimile: 0171 703 2767

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission from the publishers.

© Albedo Press Ltd 1995

All photographs © Ron Reid & © Liam Bailey 1995

Foreword text © John Peel 1995

Ron Reid has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as author of his photographs.

Liam Bailey has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as author of his photographs.

Editor Michael Mack

Design Sharpedge Design Ltd

Printing Jackson & Wilson

With special thanks to

Sheila and Dick Bailey, Lloyd Clater and all at Sharpedge Design, Helen Dent, David Hopwood, Sara Lloyd at *Ilford Anitec*, Keith Malone and Ian McMaster at *Joe's Basement*, Poppy Moore, Grainne Perkins, Simon Roiser.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0 9525886 0 9



ISBN 0-9525886-0-9



9 780952 588603